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TELEGRAM

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ACTION SS-45

INFO OCT-01 /046 W

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY Frankley DATE 10/9/80
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY GREEN FROM RIVES

1. AFTER FOUR WEEKS OF ALARMS AND EXCURSIONS, SACKINGS OF THE NVN AND PRG CHANCERIES, THE OUSTING OF THE CHIEF OF STATE, AND OVERT NVNA/VC INTERFERENCE IN CAMBODIAN AFFAIRS, THE LOCAL SITUATION APPEARS TO HAVE REACHED A SHORT PERIOD OF GESTATION.
2. WITH REGARD TO THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT, IT CAN HONESTLY BE SAID THAT IT HAS BEHAVED WITH REMARKABLE CALM AND WITH CONSIDERABLE SKILL. IT HAS CAREFULLY RESTRAINED PEOPLE AND ARMY FROM EXCESSES WHICH MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED VIS-A-VIS VIETNAMESE AND CHINESE AND HAS CONCENTRATED ON KEEPING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FOCUSED ON ITS OWN INNOCENCE AND THE GUILT OF THE NVN/PRG. INTERNALLY, IT HAS BEGUN THE CONSOLIDATION OF ITS POWER THROUGH THE USE OF RADIO, PRESS, YOUTH, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INTELLECTUALS, AS WELL AS THE MILITARY. IT HAS APPARENTLY RETAINED THE LOYALTY OF THE ARMY, MILITIA, POLICE, AND IT IS BEING SUPPORTED BY STUDENTS, PRESS AND CIVIL SERVANTS.
3. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT HAS THE SITUATION COMPLETELY IN HAND. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF IMPONDERABLES: THE PEASANTRY IN CERTAIN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAVE NOT BEEN AS PASSIVE AS EXPECTED, PROBABLY BECAUSE OF COMMUNIST AGITATIONS; THE FUTURE ACTIONS OF NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE STILL UNCLEAR; THE POSITIONS OF THE SOVIETS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE CHICOMS REMAIN OBSCURE; THERE REMAINS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SIHANOUK MAY REALLY TRY TO COME BACK WITH THE HELP OF THE NVNA/VC.

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4. PERHAPS MORE WORRISOME IS THE CONTINUED FENCE-SITTING ON THE PART OF ALL NATIONS, ESPECIALLY ASIAN ONES, WITH REGARD TO COOPERATION WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. A GOOD INDICATION OF THIS HAS APPEARED IN OUR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE PRESENCE OF NEUTRAL OR NON-ALIGNED STATES ON THE OCCASION OF THE RELEASE OF THE COLUMBIA EAGLE. THE QUESTION MAY WELL BECOME ACUTE IF, AS IS RUMORED, THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT GOES AHEAD WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC AS EARLY AS APRIL 11. THE LATTER DATE IS THE LATEST REPORT AND MIGHT WELL BE CORRECT SINCE IT COMES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE LONG CAMBODIAN NEW YEAR WEEKEND.

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5. AT THE MOMENT THERE SEEM TO BE AT LEAST FIVE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES TO CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS:

A. MOST SATISFACTORY WOULD APPEAR TO BE CONSOLIDATION OF LON NOL GOVERNMENT IN POWER WITH ITS MORE TRULY NEUTRAL POLICY, ITS PLANNED LIBERALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY AND ITS ALMOST CERTAIN GREATER DESIRE FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION. IF THIS OCCURS, OF COURSE, PROGRESS WILL PROBABLY BE CAUTIOUS AND IRREGULAR AS THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS FRIENDS AND NEW ALIGNMENTS WHILE TRYING NOT TO FRIGHTEN COMMUNISTS. FUTURE MIGHT ALSO SEE LESS INTERNAL POLITICAL STABILITY ONCE EMERGENCY OVER AND RIVAL FACTIONS CAN TURN ATTENTION TO POLITICAL BICKERING, ETC.

B. A SECOND OUTCOME COULD BE REINSTALLATION OF SIHANOUK THROUGH DIRECTOR INDIRECT MEANS. FOR INSTANCE, HE COULD PROBABLY RETURN VIA ONE OF BORDER PROVINCES, RAISE SOME SORT OF ARMY AND RESUME POWER WITH AN ASSIST FROM NVNA/VC. ON OTHER HAND, HE COULD ESTABLISH HIMSELF IN BORDER PROVINCE SUCH AS RATANAKIRI AND MONDUL KIRI WHICH ALREADY HEAVILY INFILTRATED BY NVNA/VC AND SET UP GOVERNMENTAL FA LA SOUPHANNA VONG IN HOPES EVENTUALLY REGAINING POWER THROUGH SUBVERSION OR AS RESULT OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (WE NOTE FRENCH HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF A SIHANOUK GROUP AT SUCH A MEETING). IN THIS CASE ONE WONDERS HOW LONG CHICOMS WOULD WAIT BEFORE REPLACING HIM BY A MORE DOCILE PUPPET.

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C. A THIRD POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT COULD BE AN ARRANGEMENT OF SOME SORT BETWEEN THE DRVN/PRG AND CAMBODIA, PERHAPS REVERTING PRETTY MUCH TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. IN THIS CASE, SIHANOUK MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT RETURN BUT IF HE DID IT WOULD MEAN THE END OF LON NOL, SIRIK MATAK AND ANY OTHERS.

D. THE FOURTH AND MOST DANGEROUS COURSE WOULD, IN MY OPINION, BE AN NVNA/VC DIRECT ATTACK ON PHNOM PENH TO SEIZE THE NATION, EITHER TO REINSTALL SIHANOUK OR PLACE ANOTHER IN POWER. THIS WOULD SEEM RAISE POSSIBILITY OF REACTION BY THAI WHO MIGHT INVADE FROM WEST IN ORDER PROTECT SELVES BY RETAKING PROVINCES OF BATTAM BANG, ODDAR MEAN SHREY AND PART OF SIEM REAP. THIS, IN TURN, WOULD PRESAGE VN-THAI CLASH WHICH COULD CALL INTO EFFECT SEATO AND THAI-US AGREEMENTS LEADING THERE BY TO EVER-ENLARGING CONFLICT. IT WOULD ALSO PROBABLY MEAN A CALL FOR DIRECT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE BY THE LON NON GOVERNMENT.

E. THE FINAL FORESEEABLE AND OF THE DEVELOPING CAMBODIAN SITUATION IS ONE WHICH COULD RESULT FROM ANY OF THE FOREGOING, NAMELY A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP OF EITHER THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT.

6. OF THE GREATEST MOMENT IS THE YET UNKNOWN INTENT OF HANOI AND THE PRG. WE NOW TEND TO BELIEVE THAT NVN/PRG HAD LARGER HAND IN TAKEP AND KAMPOT DEMONSTRATIONS THAN PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED. NEWSMEN HAVE CRISS-CROSSED AREA DURING PAST WEEK AND THEIR EARLIER RESERVATIONS RE GOVERNMENT ALLEGATIONS OF VC INVOLVEMENT HAVE LARGELY DISAPPEARED AS RESULT THEIR TALKS WITH VARIETY OF OFFICERS IN MANY LOCATIONS.

7. EMBASSY WOULD ASCRIBE INITIAL PRE-SIHANOUK DEMONSTRATIONS AS INTIAL PROBABLY VC/NYN AND BELIEVES REASSESSMENT MUST BE UNDERWAY PRIOR DECISION HOW TO PROCEED.¹⁰

8. IN MILITARY FIELD, NVNA/VC INTENTION ALSO UNCLEAR. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT, REPORTS INDICATE LATTER TRYING CUT WHAT EVER SUPPLY LINES EXIST. CORRESPONDENTS HAVE BEEN TOLD IN AT LEAST TWO AREAS THAT VC SUPPLIES LOW AND IN ONE INSTANCE WERE TOLD VC TAKING RICE BY FORCE. WHETHER BORDER BELT WHICH ENEMY PRESENTLY CONTROLS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO SUSTAIN ITS FORCES REMAINS UNKNOWN BUT MAY WELL INFLUENCE

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The seal of the United States Department of State is located at the top center of the document. It features an eagle with wings spread, perched on a shield with vertical stripes. Above the eagle's head is a constellation of stars. The words "DEPARTMENT OF STATE" are written in a circle around the top, and "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" is written around the bottom.

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ULTIMATE NVN/PRG DECISION.

9. US REACTION. FOR THE PRESENT IT APPEARS BEST THAT THE US CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF DEALING WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN BEING IN PHNOM PENH.

10. IF AND WHEN THE REPUBLIC IS DECLARED, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO REVIEW THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION. HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR WISE TO AWAIT REACTION OF NUMBER OF ASIAN COUNTRIES AND ALSO OF NON-ALIGNED ONES PRIOR DECISION WHICH, IN THE CASE OF THE US, MIGHT NOT PERHAPS BE AS URGENT AS FOR OTHERS SINCE WE ARE REPRESENTED BY A CHARGE WHO IS NOT ACCREDITED.

11. DIRECT ACTION IN ANY CASE WILL LARGELY SERVE TO PROVE, TO SOME, ALLEGED COMPLICITY IN RECENT EVENTS, PERHAPS TO ESCALATE THE DANGEROUS SITUATION. MOST COUNTRIES, INCLUDING CAMBODIA, ALREADY TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT USG FAVORS LON NOL GOVERNMENT.

12. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN DIRECT ASSISTANCE SUCH AS TALKING WITH SOVIETS, SUPPORTING RETURN ICC AND SOME SORT OF UN RESOLUTION, ENCOURAGING THE FRENCH AND URGING SOME OF THE SEA STATES TO MAKE FRIENDLY GESTURES, SUCH AS BORDER DECLARATIONS, TOWARD THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT COULD HELP STABILIZE THE SITUATION. DISCUSSION WITH SEA COUNTRIES, SUCH AS SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA, CEYLON, AND OTHERS ABOUT WHAT THEY REALLY EXPECT IF SIHANOUK RETURNED IN VIEW HIS REMARKS FROM PEKING, COULD PERHAPS ELICIT WARNINGS FROM THE SEA AND OTHER STATES RE: THE DANGERS OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE IN CAMBODIA AND THE AREA AS A WHOLE. SUCH TALKS MIGHT ALSO BE USEFUL IN CERTAIN AFRICAN QUARTERS WITH RESPECT TO THE FORTHCOMING DAR ES SALAAM MEETING, THOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE THE LIST OF THOSE INVITED OR ATTENDING DAR CONFERENCE.

13. IN THE LONGER RUN, QUESTION OF AID WILL CERTAINLY BE POSED. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE TYPE OF SUGGESTIONS CONTAINED IN THE MARCH FOUR LETTER TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY GREEN FROM ME ON POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE STILL APPEARS VALID.

14. IN THE SHORT RUN, RESPONSES TO AID REQUESTS COULD WELL BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. BUT THOUGHT MIGHT BE GIVEN TO SUPPLYING SOMETHING THROUGH A THIRD POWER, SUCH AS INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES OR MALAYSIA. IN SOME CASES, URGENT REQUESTS

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15. US/ARVN ACTIONS ENAMATING FROM SVN SHOULD CONTINUE TO
BE BANNED EXCEPT UNDER THE EXISTANT RULES OF ENGAGEMENT,
1. E. SELF-DEFENSE.
RIVES

EXPDIS REVIEW

Oct. A - Captain [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Oct. B - [illegible]
[illegible]
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Oct. C - [illegible]
[illegible]
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Reviewed by: [illegible]
[illegible]

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